

B(Crown)T Perfins - Comments on John Nelson's Articles

By Dr Tony Llewellyn-Edwards

John Nelson's recent articles on the "forgeries" of the B(crown)T perfins certainly proved food for thought. Although I am not fully in agreement with him I feel that he has certainly thrown doubt on a number of cherished beliefs regarding these issues. I am not satisfied that he has actually proved anything, but he has, to my satisfaction at least, produced sufficient circumstantial evidence to cast considerable doubt on the previously held belief that all examples of these perfins which are neither Type I or Type II are of necessity forgeries.

I am still of the opinion that there are some forgeries. I have some misshapen pin perfins which must be forgeries and some of those identified in "GB Official Perfins" would seem to be probable forgeries - old fake type 8 which is only found on mint Jubilee issues and which appears to have been perfinned individually hole by hole and old fake type 13 which is very misshapen and has an extra "." after the "T".

What, then, can we do about it. I think John's suggestion that we simply forget everything we "know" about these perfins and start again is the best track to take. What we need are facts and that is what we do not have. I suggest that we (as a Society) produce a booklet on these perfins containing all we know as fact. At the present time this would be a very slim volume I am afraid.

There are some facts which are indisputable such as the illustrations in the Society's Book "GB Official Perfins", but I feel that it would be unsafe to classify any of the illustrated types as forgeries. I suggest we adopt the numbering in John Nelson's Article (part 2) to get away from the idea that some are forgeries and some not.

What we need are more facts and I suggest that as a Society we all try to identify as many facts as possible regarding this issue. Anyone and everyone can do their own bit of research and at some later date all the facts can be pulled together into a draft article to be published as part of the Bulletin for judgement by the members. If we can produce a viable

pamphlet on this issue the Society could publish it for sale or as part of the Bulletin.

I can offer one fact to start us off. These perfins were officially brought into use on 27th January 1881 as stated in "GB Official Perfins". This was verified from a Board of Trade document during the writing of the book. At the time I was employed by the Board of Trade (as a Principal Surveyor) and this was the only fact I was able to extract from hours of dredging through official archives. This, of course, does not mean that all examples on stamps issued before this date are fakes. Stock would have been produced before this date in readiness for the commencement, and quite possibly stamps already in stock (which may have been in stock for a considerable time) could have been perfinned long before purchase.

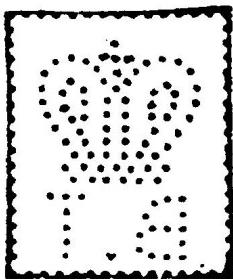
How do we find "fact"? Well that is up to you. For my contribution I will see if statistics can help us. I have a large number of Type I perfins on various issues and have analysed the postmarks. Amongst my collection 48 have identifiable London Postmarks and none have identifiable postmarks from places outside London. This suggests to me that (practically) all Type I were used in London. An important part of any statistical analysis is to check the significance of any data away from the norm. Can anyone let me know of any Type I examples postmarked outside London?

My next stage is to do a similar analysis of other types. My collection does not contain too many examples of those we used to call "fakes" which have identifiable postmarks, but of the ones I do have, 17 have postmarks outside London and three have London postmarks. This suggests that there is some difference in usage between examples with the old Type I and the others. No place appears more than once amongst the non-London postmarks, so it does not seem that the other perfin designs were used in one particular place.

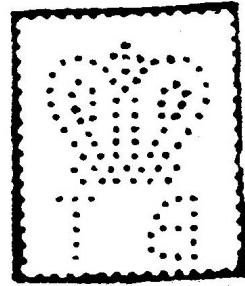
Clearly the number of stamps I have is not sufficient to do a statistical analysis so I am suggesting that all members join in. I suggest we analyse Kelson Type 9 (ex Fake 1) as it is fairly common and relatively easy to identify. The "B" has been described as a "D" with a paunch and belt, which I think describes it well. (See the illustration over page). We

should class examples with and without the "." as the same at this stage. I do not have sufficient postmarked examples to complete the analysis, but would ask all readers to search their collections for examples of this type and report any identifiable postmarks. Analysis of the results should show if these examples were mostly used in one place or area. If the response to this call is useful I will do similar analysis on other types.

If anyone has any
other ideas for
discovering facts
about this perfin -
get to it and report in.



Fake 1



Fake 1a

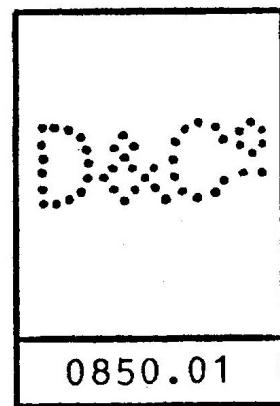
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Member's Comments on Previous Articles

Member's Queries Bulletin 295 Page 7

This query concerned a 1d Plate 191 with a partial perfin. JOHN NELSON says it arises from nothing more unusual than incompetent operation of a perforating press.

He believes the die in question is D0850.01 (the full identity DAVIES & Co, Advertising Agents, Booksellers etc. 1 Finch Lane, Cornhill, London EC later 95 Bishopsgate, EC2) which was constructed to be used with the stamps sideways. When used with the stamps upright part of the die, in this case the 'D', overlaps on to the adjoining stamp.



The adjoining stamp, was however fed into the press in the opposite direction so that the overlapping part of its 'D' was perforated on to the first stamp. The appearance of an overlapping oval and rectangle is therefore just two interlocking letters 'D', one of them inverted.